Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EPG-02 FAA-00 L-03
H-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /061 W
-------101802Z 118586 /45

R 101727Z MAY 77 FM AMEMBASSY PARIS TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2662 INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652 N/A TAGS: EAIR, FR, US

SUBJ: CIVAIR: NATIONAL'S MIAMI-PARIS OPERATION

REF: (A) PARIS 13543 (B) STATE 104017

- 1. SUMMARY: NATIONAL AIRLINES MEETING MAY 9 WITH ESPEROU WENT WELL AND LATTER WILL SUBMIT REPORT TO MINISTER FOR DECISION END THIS WEEK OR EARLY NEXT WEEK. NATIONAL WANTS US INTERVENE WITH MINISTER BUT WE HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS OVER MAKING EARLY DEMARCHE AND DEFER TO DEPT.'S JUDGMENT. NOTWITHSTANDING A POSSIBLE BRITISH CONNECTION, WE STILL THINK EARLY CAB ACTION ON TORONTO WOULD BE HELPFUL. END SUMMARY
- 2. BROCK OF NATIONAL AIRLINES HAD WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS "FAIRLY CORDIAL" MEETING MAY 9 WITH ESPEROU OF DGAC. BROCK REASSURED ESPEROU ON NINETY-DAY DURATION OF NATIONAL'S PRESENT AUTHORIZATION TO OPERATE MIAMI-PARIS ROUTE, THOUGH MADE NO SECRET OF FACT THAT NATIONAL HAD LONG ASPIRED TO HAVE THAT ROUTE PERMANENTLY. BROCK PROVIDED ESPEROU REVISED TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS FOR THE THREE-MONTH PERIOD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NATIONAL WOULD OPERATE AND POINTED OUT THAT SINCE 27.5 PERCENT OF THIS TRAFFIC WAS ALREADY BOOKED TRAFFIC PROJECTION WAS REALISTIC AND JUSTIFIED FOUR FLIGHTS WEEKLY DURING THAT PERIOD. BROCK ALSO NOTED THAT 60 PERCENT OF PASSENGERS HAVING ALREADY RESERVED ON MIAMI-PARIS ROUTE PLANNED TERMINATE PARIS OR STOP OVER FOR ONE OR TWO NIGHTS, INDICATING

THAT NATIONAL WOULD BE GENERATING MUCH NEW TRAFFIC. BROCK SAID ESPEROU SEEMED SATISFIED BY THESE EXPLANATIONS.

- 3. ESPEROU MADE VAGUE REFERENCE TO NUMBER OF US CARRIERS THAT WOULD BE OPERATING IN TRANSATLANTIC TRAFFIC. BROCK SAID HE ELECTED NOT TO DEBATE THIS POINT AND MERELY NOTED THAT AIR FRANCE HAD FILED NO OBJECTION WITH CAB CONCERNING NATIONAL'S APPLICATION TO SERVE PARIS.
- 4. ESPEROU TOLD BROCK THAT HE CONSIDERED HE NOW HAD ALL THE INFORMATION NEEDED FOR PREPARATION OF HIS WRITTEN REPORT THAT HE WOULD SUBMIT "TO THE MINISTER" AT END OF THIS WEEK OR EARLY NEXT WEEK. HE SAID HE WOULD REPORT TO BROCK NEXT WEEK ON WHERE THINGS STOOD. ESPEROU STRESSED ON TWO OR THREE OCCASIONS THAT HIS REPORT WOULD GO TO THE MINISTER, I.E., CAVAILLE. ESPEROU SAID HE WAS UNABLE FORETELL WHEN MINISTER WOULD ACT. BROCK STRESSED TO ESPEROU THAT THERE REMAINED ONLY 29 MORE WORKING DAYS IN FRANCE BEFORE PROPOSED INAUGURATION OF NATIONAL'S SERVICE ON JUNE 22, AND MUCH IN THE WAY OF PREPARATORY WORK REMAINED FOR

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EPG-02 FAA-00 L-03 H-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /061 W

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NATIONAL TO CARRY OUT IN THE MEANTIME. EARLY DECISION WAS THUS IMPERATIVE.

5. AFTER INFORMING US OF FOREGOING BROCK SAID THAT NEXT STEP OF COURSE WOULD BE FOR EMBASSY TO TALK TO THE MINISTER AND HE INQUIRED WHEN WE MIGHT CONSIDER DOING THIS. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT NATIONAL WOULD BE TALKING TO THE DEPT. ALONG THOSE LINES. WE INFORMED HIM THAT ANY DECISION TO MAKE DEMARCHE TO CAVAILLE ON NATIONAL'S BEHALF WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM THE DEPT. AND WE STRESSED THAT WE WERE KEEPING THE DEPT. CLOSELY INFORMED ON A CURRENT BASIS. WE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAD JUST MADE DEMARCHES END LAST WEEK TO DGAC AND TO FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH MAY HAVE HELPED JOG THINGS LOOSE A BIT, AND IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO AVOID OVERKILL. DGAC AS WELL AS CAVAILLE MIGHT RESENT IT IF WE WENT OVER DGAC'S HEAD AND SOUGHT TO INFLUENCE CAVAILLE DIRECTLY WITH UNSEEMING HASTE. WE WONDERED WHAT REACTION OF USG WOULD BE, FOR EXAMPLE. IF FRENCH EMBASSY WERE TO INTERVENE TO INQUIRE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHY DOT SECRETARY OF CAB CHAIRMAN HAD NOT TAKEN A DECISION ONLY A DAY OR TWO AFTER RECEIVING A GIVEN DOSSIER. IN ANY EVENT, WE ADDED, WE WOULD BE GUIDED BY DEPT.'S INSTRUCTIONS IN THE MATTER.

6. REF (A) WAS LARGELY RESPONSIVE TO REF (B), WITH WHICH IT CROSSED. WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE BETTER FOR BROCK TO MAKE INQUIRY OF ESPEROU ON A POSSIBLE BRITISH CONNECTION, BUT WE WERE UNABLE TO CONTACT BROCK IN TIME PRIOR TO HIS MEETING. WE ARE NOT SURE IT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE NOW FOR US TO QUERY ESPEROU DIRECTLY ON THE SUBJECT. WHETHER OR NOT THE BRITISH CONNECTION DOES EXIST, AND IF SO HOW STRONG IT IS IN DETERMINING THE FRENCH POSITION. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT EARLIEST POSSIBLE CAB ACTION ON LONGER-TERM EXTENSION OF AIR FRANCE AUTHORITY AT TORONTO WOULD HAVE SALUTARY EFFECT ON GOF'S ATTITUDE VIS-A-VIS NATIONAL AND AT THE SAME TIME HELP THINGS FOR TWA AT NICE. GAMMON

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